

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY / MIDDLE EAST UPDATE
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1. [Biden: Asia-Pacific Rebalance Promotes Prosperity, Security](#) (07-18-2013)

By Donna Miles
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, July 18, 2013 – Emphasizing that economic development and peace and stability are intertwined, Vice President Joe Biden said today the goal of the increased U.S. focus and engagement in the Asia-Pacific region is to make it not only more secure, but more prosperous as well.

[Biden spoke](#) to a Center for American Progress forum at George Washington University before leaving next week for economic and strategy discussions in India and Singapore.

The security the United States has provided over the past 60 years “has enabled the region’s people to turn their talents and hard work into an economic miracle,” Biden said. “Now, we want to hasten the emergence of an Asia-Pacific order that delivers prosperity for all the nations involved.”

The U.S. rebalance to the Asia-Pacific region reflects the importance of a region that, despite remarkable promise, struggles with uncertainty and risk, the vice president said. “We are focused on the risks of disruption of commerce, proliferation, humanitarian disasters, conflict between nations and the persistent threat caused by North Korea,” he told the audience.

Standing up to these challenges, he said, requires strong alliances, institutions and partnerships that tie regional countries together so they work together toward goals that benefit all. They also promote understanding and avenues for countries to peacefully resolve differences, he said.

Toward this end, the United States wants to be a partner in creating “21st-century rules of the road” that would clarify acceptable international behavior, Biden said. Such rules would extend from economic to security issues, benefitting “not only the United States and the region, but the world as a whole,” he said.

Recognizing maritime disputes in the South China Sea, Biden urged China and the Association of South East Asian Nations to work more closely toward a code of conduct that establishes universally acceptable standards of international behavior.

“That means no intimidation, no coercion, no aggression and a commitment from all parties to reduce the risk of mistakes and miscalculation,” he said. “It is in everyone’s interest that there be freedom of navigation, unimpeded lawful commerce, respect for international laws and norms and a peaceful resolution of territorial disputes.”

Biden also cited broad agreement that North Korea’s nuclear missile program “presents a clear and present danger to stability,” particularly in East Asia. The United States is working closely with Japan, South Korea, China and Russia to get North Korea to stop these activities, he said.

The vice president also expressed the U.S. willingness to engage directly with North Korea – but only, he emphasized, if agrees to “genuine” negotiations and commits to giving up its nuclear ambitions.

“North Korea can have peace and prosperity like the rest of the region, but only without nuclear weapons,” he said. “We are open to engaging with any nation that is prepared to live up to its international obligations.”

As the United States expands its engagement in the region, Biden called its long-standing alliances with Japan, South Korea, Australia, the Philippines and Thailand the cornerstones of the strategy. “Across the board, with these alliances, we are at a high-water mark in terms of cooperation between our leaders, both military and political, and the support of our people,” he said.

He emphasized, however, that the rebalance does not mean the United States is losing its focus on the Middle East and Europe.

“We are not leaving Europe,” he said. “Europe remains the cornerstone of our engagement with the rest of the world. That is a fact. We are not going anywhere.

“As a matter of fact,” he continued, “we are absolutely convinced that our engagement in the Pacific is in the overwhelming self-interest of Europe. Europe, just like the United States, will benefit greatly as well from stability in the Pacific.”

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[Special Report: U.S. Pacific Command](#)

[Vice President Biden on Asia-Pacific Policy](#)

2. State Dept. on U.N. Measures for Outer Space Activities (07-18-2013)

Statement by Marie Harf, Deputy Spokesperson on Consensus Achieved by the UN Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures for Outer Space Activities

The United States welcomes the achievement of landmark consensus by the UN Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities during last week’s meetings in New York.

Through these discussions, the United States sought to find solutions to common challenges and problems in an increasingly contested and congested space environment. The Group's study was a unique opportunity to establish consensus on the importance and priority of voluntary and pragmatic transparency and confidence-building measures to ensure the sustainability and safety of the space environment as well as to strengthen stability and security in space for all nations.

The Group recommended that States and international organizations consider and implement a range of measures to enhance the transparency of outer space activities, further international cooperation, consultations, and outreach, and promote international coordination to enhance safety and predictability in the uses of outer space.

Furthermore, the Group endorsed efforts to pursue political commitments – including a multilateral code of conduct – to encourage responsible actions in, and the peaceful use of, outer space. In this regard, the Group noted the efforts of the European Union to develop an International Code of Conduct for Outer Space Activities through open-ended consultations with the international community. Previously, on January 17, 2012, the Secretary of State announced that the United States has decided to join with the European Union and other nations to develop a Code of Conduct.

All UN member states share a common commitment to the pursuit of peace and security. We support the principle, solemnly declared by the United Nations General Assembly in December 1963, that the exploration and use of outer space shall be carried on in accordance with international law, including the Charter of the United Nations, in the interest of maintaining international peace and security and promoting international cooperation and understanding.

In the half century since this principle – subsequently incorporated into the 1967 Outer Space Treaty -- was recognized, all nations and peoples have seen a radical transformation in the way we live our daily lives, in many ways due to our use of space. The globe-spanning and interconnected nature of space capabilities and the world's growing dependence on them mean that irresponsible acts in space can have damaging consequences for all. As a result, all nations must work together to adopt approaches for responsible activity in space to preserve this right for the benefit of future generations.

The United States is pleased to join consensus to affirm the role of voluntary, non-legally binding transparency and confidence-building measures to strengthen stability in space. This consensus sends a strong signal: States must remain committed to enhance the welfare of humankind by cooperating with others to maintain the long-term sustainability, safety, security, and stability of the space environment.

The United States looks forward to the official issuance of the Group of Governmental Experts' study and our future dialogues on these issues with the international community, including all relevant entities and organizations of the United Nations system.

3. Poland, U.S. Unite for Two Weeks of Aerial Training (07-17-2013)

By Daryl Knee
52nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs

Lask Air Base, Poland — Poland continues to build its relationship with the United States as the nations' air forces integrate their capabilities in a training event July 15–26.

This marks the third time U.S. aircraft have flown into Poland as part of a partnership-building initiative that began in October 2012.

“We are demonstrating the commitment that we’ve made to Poland,” said U.S. Air Force Major Matthew Spears, commander of Detachment 1 at Lask Air Base.

The aviation detachment began in 2011 as a discussion between the U.S. ambassador to Poland and the Polish defense minister. In June of that year, the two signed a memorandum authorizing and creating the detachment. Since the detachment’s opening in 2012, both militaries have worked to create an enduring American presence in the country.

“We consider them one of our top allies, and it’s an ally that we want to improve our relationship with and partnership with,” Spears said. “So, the aviation detachment is a mechanism with which we can strengthen that partnership.”

The detachment is the administrative hub of the aerial training program and is part of the 52nd Fighter Wing at Spangdahlem Air Base, Germany. For this rotation, the U.S. aircraft are from the 31st Fighter Wing at Aviano Air Base, Italy — a major air combat asset of U.S. Air Forces in Europe.

During each rotation, the detachment balances the training needs of participating aircraft. Both Aviano and Lask employ the F-16 Fighting Falcon fighter aircraft. Some of the training will focus on communication effectiveness and familiarization of techniques.

“We get to learn from our allies,” said U.S. Air Force Major Jason Monaco, who is in charge of the Aviano aircraft and people on the rotation. “We get to train with them at all levels, whether it’s the pilots flying the jets, the maintenance guys turning the wrenches or the guys building the bombs — we get to see what the Polish air force does.”

“And that’s something we don’t get when we’re just working with each other back home,” he added.

Spears said the Polish government’s hospitality has been indicative of their eagerness to share security efforts across Europe, and hosting the U.S. military in their country is not the first time that Poland has demonstrated its commitment to peace.

“When you look at the history of the two nations, you find that this isn’t a new partnership,” Spears said. “It’s a partnership and heritage that dates back to our country’s existence. Really, we’re continuing on those traditions and that heritage, because we do value Poland as a nation and a partner in NATO.”

4. Hagel Meets With Troops at Fort Bragg, Discusses Budget (07-15-2013)

By Claudette Roulo
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, July 15, 2013 – In an uncertain and dangerous world, American service members are helping to build a better future for all mankind, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel said today during a town hall meeting at Fort Bragg, N.C.

“We are truly defining a future for our country and helping others define their futures around the world,” Hagel told troops, civilians and family members at the event.

Service members do more than just put on a uniform, and civilians do more than just show up to work, the secretary said. Everyone connected to the Defense Department is part of something bigger than themselves -- bigger than even the nation, Hagel added.

"I think occasionally we all can drift a bit and define ourselves, define our work, and define our missions in a more narrow channel," the defense secretary said. "But we are helping build a new world, a better world, a fairer world, a freer world, and we can't do it alone."

The world looks to the United States not because it's bigger, better or prosperous, Hagel said, but because of what the nation represents.

"That's a heavy burden to carry," he said, one that can't be carried alone. Over the years, through many difficult lessons, the United States has learned -- it must rely on partnerships and relationships to solve some of the world's biggest problems, Hagel said.

Tolerance, respect and dignity still anchor the human condition, the secretary said. "That's what we try to address every day and what we try to protect every day, and hopefully give people opportunities to live that kind of life."

This effort is not without its challenges, the defense secretary said.

The nation is unwinding from the longest war it has ever been in, but it still has responsibilities and commitments around the world, Hagel said. The question -- not for the first time in the nation's history -- is how to balance these competing needs with the department's more direct responsibilities for the nation's fiscal health, he said.

"This time is probably more dramatic for some of the reasons I've already mentioned, but also if these dramatic defense spending reductions continue on the course they're on through the current budget cap sequestration," Hagel said. "This is forcing us to take deeper, steeper, and more abrupt reductions than we've ever had to do."

Hagel said his role as defense secretary is to prepare the department for the future based on today's realities, and that includes the possibility that sequestration will continue. "I could not stand back as secretary of defense and try to lead this institution based on -- 'Well, I hope we'll get a change' or 'Well, I think maybe something will change,'" he said.

"You can't lead based on hope and thinking and maybes," the secretary continued. "You have a responsibility of leading ... with the reality of what's in front of you, and you do the best you can to repair your institution. In the end, that's the definition of each of our lives."

That reality forced the department to prioritize, Hagel said, adding that he had to make some difficult choices. And while budget isn't directing national security strategy, he said, it's an important part.

"You can have all the strategy you want," the defense secretary said, "but you better be able to assure the president of the United States, commander in-chief, and the people of this country and your families that, in fact, we can implement that strategy -- that, in fact, the president has the options when he calls the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff or me, and we call commanders and say, 'Can we do it? Do we have the capacity to do it?'"

One vehicle for addressing budget limitations, the recently announced force structure changes, is predicated on preserving combat power and readiness, Hagel said. The military's only responsibility is the defense of the nation, he added, and everything else has to fit within that framework.

"That's not always an easy assemblage of pieces to have to come together to assure that one responsibility, especially during a time of ... significant reductions in our budget," the defense secretary said. Preserving current readiness is coming at a cost to future readiness, "but I have to preserve as much as I can preserve with the resources I have," he said. If sequestration continues into fiscal year 2014, an additional \$52 billion in cuts will occur across the department, Hagel added.

As he sought additional ways to protect readiness, furloughs for the Defense Department's civilian employees were the last thing he wanted to do, Hagel said, but he told the Fort Bragg audience he had no other options. Congress was unwilling to authorize the reprogramming of funds that would have prevented the need to furlough about 650,000 defense civilian employees, he explained.

"I could not take down that readiness line any further than where we were," he said. "We've essentially cut and frozen everything we can in order to maintain those numbers."

This may be the most difficult time to be serving the nation, Hagel said, "but we have no choice but to get through it, and we will get through it."

Though some of the services were in better fiscal shape than others going into the sequestration period, Hagel said, he was determined for the department to stay unified. "It's the whole point of the joint command," he said. "I couldn't as secretary of defense get into a situation where I was going to allow each service to make their own decisions on this. ... I thought that everybody had to come into this together and go out together."

"If for no other reason," he continued, "I did that because I just think it's the fair way to do it, as fair as you can be in this business."

When people are treated unfairly, the secretary said, it does damage to the institution.

"This is bigger than the Defense Department. It's people. We as individuals -- as human beings -- each want to be treated fairly, with some dignity and some respect," Hagel said. "And if you think you're not treated fairly, there will be a residue of a problem there. And I thought it would be a mistake for me to make a decision to allow each of the services to figure out, 'Well, I've got more money in my budget, and maybe he squandered his budget, and so therefore, I should be in a higher position because of my budget.'"

Hagel said a great deal of credit belongs to the service chiefs for maintaining departmental unity and not allowing budget constraints to drive the services into "tribal warfare."

Despite the department's efforts, the fiscal future remains uncertain, the defense secretary said. Following a departmentwide Strategic Choices and Management Review, Hagel said, the department has mapped out three options: the president's proposed budget for fiscal year 2014, full sequestration and some compromise in between.

"But I think it's fair to say if we're going to be living with an additional \$52 billion cut, there is going to continue to be bad news with every aspect of our budget," the defense secretary said.

Though he doesn't yet know what Congress will do about the fiscal year 2014 budget request, Hagel said, he has a responsibility to work closely with the president, Congress and the people of the United States. "That's the way our Constitution is built, and we work best when we're working together," he added.

"We're going to work through this," the defense secretary said. "In the end, we are defining a new force structure, a new institution, not unlike after Vietnam, not unlike after every conflict, not unlike every sequence of the historic cycle of world affairs."

Biographies:

[Chuck Hagel](#)

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[Remarks by Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel to Soldiers & Civilians on Fort Bragg, Fayetteville, N.C.](#)

[5. Pacom Commander Discusses North Korea Situation \(07-12-2013\)](#)

By Karen Parrish

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, July 12, 2013 – While North Korea's historic, alternating cycle of provocative attacks and inconclusive negotiations is well known, its continued pursuit of nuclear weapons limits any chance of meaningful international dialogue, the commander of U.S. Pacific Command told reporters yesterday.

Navy Adm. Samuel J. Locklear III, who was here this week as part of the U.S. delegation for security, strategic and economic dialogues with Chinese officials, responded to questions on North Korea's intent.

North and South Korea, whose capitals are Pyongyang and Seoul, respectively, have maintained an uneasy cease-fire since 1953. Communist North Korea is allied with China, but under three generations of Kim family rule and a "military first" policy, its people have suffered widespread hunger and deprivation as North Korea pours its limited resources into its armed forces and nuclear weapons program.

While the United States has provided food to North Korea in times of famine, and assisted U.S. nongovernmental organizations with aid to fight infectious disease outbreaks and supply electricity at provincial hospitals, most other trade and aid is tightly restricted by U.S. and international economic sanctions.

"I don't have a crystal ball on that one," Locklear said when asked whether more provocations from Pyongyang are likely in the near future. "History would say that there would likely be one."

Locklear added, however, that the position of countries in the region as well as the United States is "that North Korea must be committed to the total denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, and present a complete and verifiable plan to do that. And that's kind of the bottom-line entry of how you would get into a broader set of negotiations with North Korea at this time."

During meetings in June, President Barack Obama and Chinese President Xi Jinping agreed that North Korea must denuclearize, that neither country will accept North Korea as a nuclear-armed state, and that both nations would work to deepen U.S.-China cooperation and dialogue to achieve denuclearization.

Locklear said North Korea has a range of missiles, from short-range to intercontinental, but only the short-range missiles have been demonstrated. North Korea's medium-range missile and a purported road-mobile intercontinental ballistic missile, he said, have not been credibly demonstrated.

North Korea's leaders announced in December they had successfully launched a satellite. In February, they completed an underground nuclear test, and in subsequent months communications were cut off with South Korea, and Kaesong, a joint North-South business and industrial sector situated on the North Korean side of the border, was shuttered.

"The fact that they were able to successfully do that launch was a demonstration to us that they have the ability to put something into a larger ballistic orbit," Locklear said. "Now, whether they can successfully take that technology and mate it with where they are in their nuclear program has not been demonstrated."

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